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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [HA](#)

SUBJECT: HAITIAN NATIONAL POLICE POISED TO TACKLE REBEL  
VIOLENCE

REF: A. PAP 689

[1](#)B. PAP 688

Classified By: Ambassador James B. Foley, reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Following another attack against his officers on March 27, Haitian National Police (HNP) Director General (DG) Leon Charles told Ambassador on March 29 that the HNP was preparing to undertake three significant operations in the coming days to root out violent gang leaders and their ex-FADH counterparts. Charles underscored, however, that the HNP was still outgunned by the heavily armed gangs, and requested urgent attention to the weapons license request still under review by the USG. The DG also confirmed plans for integrating 200 ex-FADH into the upcoming 17th training class for the HNP and repeated his assurance that these recruits would be treated the same as all the other trainees. The meeting finished at the same time a planned pro-Lavalas protest got underway downtown under the watchful eye of both the UN and the HNP. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Charles explained that on the night of March 27, several heavily armed men associated with Gren Sonnen's gang attacked the house of the Director of Police for the West Department (DDO) near Delmas 33. The HNP sent officers to the scene to respond at which point a firefight between the HNP and gang members ensued. At that moment, another vehicle carrying 3 police officers, a private security guard and a civilian driver entered the crossfire near the gang members. One of the police officers and the two civilians were killed. Later that night, criminal gangs reportedly killed two individuals at the port area as well.

[1](#)3. (C) The Delmas 33 attack is the latest in a string of violent incidents against the police and other official outposts of the IGOH allegedly perpetrated by heavily armed outlaws associated with renegade ex-FADH leader Ravix Remissainthe, and gang leaders Sonnen and Dred Wilme. On March 25, a grenade was thrown at the Provisional Election Council (CEP) headquarters in the same Delmas neighborhood, and on March 22 a bodyguard for the Minister of Justice was killed. Sonnen announced on the radio March 29 that he was on a "man hunt" for official members of the IGOH, while Ravix has called his followers in the Central Plateau to wage a "guerrilla war" against the HNP and MINUSTAH. Post has noted on many occasions the growing alliance between Ravix and Port-au-Prince gang leaders.

[1](#)4. (C) Charles told the Ambassador that the attacks show the armed opposition is desperate and has nowhere left to hide. He estimated that there is a core group of only 15 bandits associated with most of the incidents, but that they were much better armed (with M-14s in particular) than the HNP. Charles explained that Sonnen used to be an informant at the Delmas 33 police station under the Aristide government and knows very well how to recognize weakness and the potential for an easy attack. He suggested that all three (Wilme, Ravix and Sonnen) sustain their ranks with a constant inflow of cash from drug trafficking and carjacking.

[1](#)5. (C) The HNP has planned three strategies for targeting these individuals. First, Charles has replaced the command at the Delmas 33 with a stronger cadre of officers, though he admitted the district still lacked the proper weapons to face off against Sonnen's gang. (Note: MINUSTAH has also stepped up foot patrols in the Delmas 33 area and is providing round the clock security for the CEP. End note). The Ambassador assured Charles post would follow up on the IGOH weapons order waiver request forwarded to the Department March 16.

[1](#)6. (C) Second, Charles described a joint MINUSTAH/HNP operation in Cite Soleil to control access into and out of the area for two weeks beginning March 31. The mission will establish checkpoints and provide a base for smaller operations inside the dense slum area to try to root out gang leaders, particularly Dred Wilme, providing a platform for humanitarian projects to begin flowing into the neighborhood once again. Third, Charles also confirmed MINUSTAH, CIVPOL

and the HNP have established a special team to target the most wanted individuals. He said Special Intelligence Unit (SIU) Director Michael Lucius was assisting along with ten HNP officers detailed to the team.

17. (C) Charles confirmed once again the same information regarding the integration of ex-soldiers into the HNP he gave the Charge March 15 (PAP 688). He said a list of 450 ex-FADH had been identified by the Bureau de Gestion, from which Charles was in the process of selecting 200 candidates to join the 17th class of recruits slated to begin training in April. Charles said that the recently demobilized ex-soldiers from Cap Haitien (ref B) were not part of this group and would not integrate into the HNP. It was Charles' understanding, he said, that the 200 ex-FADH in the 17th class would be the last group of former military integrated into the HNP this year. He added that he planned to bring the ex-FADH from the 15th class who left early back to the Academy to complete their training in April. Charles also denied that the ex-FADH in the 15th class had been deployed to HNP swat units, and assured that they had instead been positioned at several sub-stations throughout the country.

18. (C) Charles said the 450 potential ex-FADH recruits had already taken a written test and a physical exam and were awaiting the results of their lab tests. He assured the Ambassador that the tests given to the ex-FADH recruits in March were the "same type" as the exams given last summer to civilian recruits. Ambassador Foley explained that it was imperative for the USG to be able to verify that the testing and training were totally legitimate in every possible way, and asked Charles to give the ex-FADH recruits last summer's test as well. Charles said he would meet with the Police Academy Director Maxime and OAS Vetting Program Director Guy Magny to discuss the possibility. Charles also downplayed rumors that other countries (France, Mexico, Chile) would contribute significantly to HNP training, saying these ideas "were a dream." The Ambassador repeated that the U.S. welcomed assistance from other countries as long as all the HNP recruits received the same training.

19. (C) Charles worried that others in the IGOH had made unrealistic promises to the ex-FADH about jobs in the HNP in order to convince them to demobilize. He fretted that the Cap Haitien group set an example that others may follow, and indicated the IGOH could have over 1,000 former soldiers looking for jobs soon, including the 235 from Cap Haitien; 300 from Ouanaminthe; 200 from the Central Plateau; 150 from Les Cayes; 100 from Arcahaie, and 80 from St. Marc. Ambassador explained that the USG was willing to contribute \$3 million to the DDR process but could not release the funds until the IGOH concluded an agreement with the UN on an acceptable DDR strategy and program.

110. (C) The Ambassador finished by reminding Charles to remain vigilant on human rights abuses by the HNP. Ambassador acknowledged that there were elements, both Lavalas and ex-FADH, disguising themselves as police and committing abuses. Nonetheless, he said, the HNP must demonstrate that it is actively investigating allegations of human rights abuse in a very public way, releasing the results quickly and transparently and prosecuting officers who are found to be guilty of abuse. Charles responded that the best way to guard against human rights abuses was to increase joint operations with CIVPOL. He said that CIVPOL's co-location program with the HNP would provide the oversight and reporting needed to properly monitor human rights allegations. Ambassador promised to engage CIVPOL Commissioner Dave Beer and others in MINUSTAH to accelerate the co-location program. He also strongly encouraged Charles to change HNP uniforms and badges in an effort to differentiate legitimate HNP from impersonators. Charles welcomed proposals to create more secure identification and more visible badges but seemed reluctant to modify the HNP uniform. We will continue to press Charles on the need to clearly distinguish bonafide HNP officers from the impostors.

111. (C) Comment: It is encouraging to see the HNP and MINUSTAH on the same page regarding joint operations in Delmas, Cite Soleil and the special unit designed to track down criminal leaders such as Ravix, Sonnen and Wilme. MINUSTAH and the HNP are on the spot now that both the chimere and ex-FADH camps have declared guerrilla war against the HNP, IGOH and even the UN. As the meeting with Charles adjourned, Sonnen's gang was ransacking the area around Delmas 33 once again. The capture of just a handful of these criminal leaders would provide the HNP and MINUSTAH with a much-needed victory and open the political space significantly for elections. Unfortunately the HNP remains outgunned and is still struggling to co-locate with CIVPOL. The imminent arrival of USG-provided equipment (vehicles, supplies, computers and more) is welcome, but we should aim to expedite the weapons waiver and U.S. contribution to the joint-station program to get cooperation moving. Charles is the latest to confirm the figure of 200 ex-FADH for the 17th class, but this promise, along with our reminders to provide

equal treatment of ex-FADH recruits, will require continued vigilance on our part. End comment.

FOLEY